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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a study in which a group of women addresses challenges from feminist and postmodern theories regarding the concept of citizenship in social studies education. The purpose was to generate a public discourse on what it means to educate for democratic citizenship. The eclectic research methodology that resulted also laid the foundation for an alternative form of data representation. The study had both a substantive and methodological component. The paper describes the research process, proposes the criteria for evaluating the quality of alternative forms of data representation, and discusses the implications of this process for educational research. An appendix provides a brief excerpt of the story created from the data. Includes 5 notes and 75 references. (BT)

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Standing on the Precipice: Alternative Forms of Collaborative Inquiry and Data Representation.

by Dawn M. Shinew

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STANDING ON THE PRECIPICE: ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY AND DATA REPRESENTATION

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Speaking from what he describes as the "cutting edge" of inquiry in research methodology, Eisner (1997) suggests, "One of the basic questions scholars are now raising is how we perform the magical feat of transforming the contents of our consciousness into a public form that others can understand" (p. 4). Eisner's call from the precipice has particular relevance for educational researchers, like myself, working within/against feminist and postmodern theories while engaging in collaborative inquiry with practitioners. The feminist and postmodern discourse surrounding what it means to do research "with" and not "on" (Noffke, 1990) "Others" (hooks, 1994) has focused on issues of reflexivity, subjectivities, and the politics of representation. Eisner reminds us that the complexities of research extend beyond the ways in which we shape and are shaped by our "consciousness" and include the forms through which our research is communicated to others.

This paper describes a study in which a group of women attempted to address challenges from feminist and postmodern theories regarding the concept of citizenship in social studies education. The eclectic research methodology that resulted also laid the foundation for an alternative form of data representation. The study had both a substantive and methodological component. This paper describes the research process, proposes the criteria for evaluating the quality of alternative forms of data representation, and discusses the implications of this process for educational research. The appendix provides the reader with a brief excerpt of the story created from the data.

The Study

Social studies researchers and theorists are only beginning to explore the extent to which "gender dynamics, gender identities, and gendered knowledges affect social studies education" (Bernard-Powers, 1996, p. 2). I posit that such questions are imperative to the future of social studies education. However,

creating spaces for these questions is problematic, particularly given the extent to which such issues have traditionally been omitted from social studies discourse. Fine (1992) suggests feminists challenge the androcentric hegemony by using "disruptive voices." She invites those of us concerned with women's issues "collectively and collaboratively, to disrupt, transgress, and invent possibilities . . . displaying all our contradictions and differences" (p. xii). Fine posits feminists promote change by interrupting what have traditionally been unchallenged discourses. Stone (1996) suggests a similar strategy in describing the possibilities of "disruptive teaching." Stone advocates that reading about individuals who have been influential in promoting change through their disruptions to the status quo may provide inspiration for others. She challenges educators to acknowledge teaching, schooling and education as ethical endeavors and to accept their "obligation" to engage in disruptive teaching. Stone concludes that nothing short of displacing the status quo can address the needs of those who have been marginalized.

Stone (1996a), Bickmore (1996), and Bloom (1998) present three perspectives on the issues of citizenship and democracy. Bloom's attempt to integrate the theoretical and pedagogical dimensions of this issue reflects some of my own questions: *How do feminist social studies educators perceive the concept of "citizen"? What are their responses to the theoretical frameworks presented by feminists and others challenging the status quo in "civic education"? How do they relate these ideas to their practice?* This study represents a response to these questions and an attempt to create spaces for feminist voices in social studies education. In collaboration with a group of classroom teachers, I attempted to mobilize Fine and Stone's notion of "disruption" as a tool for demonstrating what may be considered "situated knowledges" but which are often presented as complete and unchallenged. Collectively, the group addressed what is considered to be one of the most fundamental principles in social studies education: citizenship education. The connection between education and citizenship has been at the very core of the social studies tradition and, therefore, offered a particularly interesting opportunity for disrupting our thinking and practice related to educating citizens in a democratic society.

The intention was not, however, to present an essentialist or reductionist definition of "feminist perspectives. In introducing her chapter about feminisms and qualitative research for the *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Olesen (1994) notes, "At this highly labile moment in the history of feminist thought this chapter attempts to outline feminist . . . research even as the context and contours of. . . feminism. . . are shifting" (p. 158). Hulsebosch and Koerner (1994) agree and warn that to talk about a singular feminist theory opens the door to charges of "essentialist" notions of a feminist "who can be [narrowly] defined and described" (p. 51). Stanley (1991) explains that it may be more accurate to refer to "feminismS" in a manner that emphasizes the pluralistic nature of feminist theory. Criticisms directed at feminist theory for privileging white, middle-class women's experiences (Anzaldúa, 1987; Baca Zinn, 1979, 1996; Collins, 1991; hooks, 1984, 1990; Lorde, 1984; Robinson, 1994); "the construction of the 'Third World' woman as an essentialized Other" (Lal, 1996; see also Bar-On, 1993; Mohanty, 1988; Said, 1989 and Trinh, 1989) and challenges from postmodern theorists (Code, 1991; Gore, 1993; Gorelick, 1996; Haraway, 1991; Lather, 1992; Luke, 1996; Marcus, 1994; Stacey, 1996) reflect the polyphony of voices positing challenges to an untroubled presentation of feminist theory. The diversity of voices speaking to feminist issues reflects the multiple identities and layers existing in society; these complexities not only have an impact on our interpretations of women's issues, but also on our view of the relationship between society and education.

Research Design and Procedures

The overarching goal of this study was to *generate new ways of thinking* about what it means to educate citizens for a democratic society. This objective applied to me as the "researcher," to the other participants in the study, and to those who will read our stories. Needless to say, this was not consistent with the traditional "reports of findings" contained in many research studies. Instead, this study resided in a space between a research report common to social sciences and a well-established tradition in the humanities, the personal essay. Since the intention of the study did not fit into rigid categories, the

methodology was also eclectic; the methods were, however, firmly grounded in well-established research strategies. The research process involved a group of five women engaging in a series of focus group discussions. Throughout our interactions, we worked towards self-defined goals related to our personal and professional lives. The record of our discussions served as the framework for creating a "story," a type of visual reader's theater, which intentionally blurred the boundaries between "personal" and "professional," as well as between "facts" and "fictions."[1]

Participants. Based on the following three assumptions, I invited four women to participate in the study. First, I believe that educational research ought to be collaborative and, whenever possible, involve classroom teachers. I was committed to creating spaces in which teachers claim the right to participate in the educational discourse that is often limited to the academe, just as I was interested in creating opportunities for myself, a university-based educator, to become engaged in the discourse of classroom teachers.[2] Second, I support Goodson's (1998) claim that "probably progressively more important for the future, will be the site of everyday life and identity" (p. 3). I, therefore, hoped to identify participants who were willing to examine and share our lived experiences and our identities, including the ways in which these locations and positions affected our construction of the concept of "citizen" and the ways in which we mobilized this construction in our teaching. In order to achieve this level of trust and intimacy, I concluded that participants should have some preexisting relationship – a foundation upon which our discourse could build. Finally, I decided the most effective method to engage a group in this type of inquiry process was through a form of focus group interviews, making it necessary to keep the group small enough for discussions (Morgan, 1997).

At our first meeting, the group discussed the issue of confidentiality. The group decided using our real names made the study "more authentic" and provided an opportunity for me to acknowledge their

[1] I agree, however, with Gough (1998) that "fact and fiction are much closer, both culturally and linguistically, than . . . narrative strategies imply."

[2] Note that the term used here is to "create" space and not "give" voice. I hope to avoid the impression that I view myself as a gatekeeper or one in a position to grant teachers the "permission" to speak. I believe their voices are already speaking; they are simply not "heard" often enough.

intellectual contributions, as well as their time and commitment. In addition to myself, Leanne Gabriel, Nancy Mallory, Shannon Tuzzi-Paletti, and Doreen Uhas-Sauer participated in the study. As a group, we represented a variety of levels of teaching experience (from 1 to 31 years) with positions in urban and suburban schools. In addition, the group ranged in age from 27 to 54 years. We knew each other well and worked together in the Social Studies and Global Education Professional Development School Network at The Ohio State University, as well as projects involving collaboration with civic educators in Poland.

At our first meeting, it became clear we were all interested in the opportunity to engage in an ongoing dialogue about the issue. However, the others were resistant to the possibility of extensive writing. When conceptualizing the study, I hoped each of us would assume an active role in creating the story; virtually all of the examples of collaborative research I knew involved each of the participants in the writing process in some way (Finley & Knowles, 1995; Hunsaker & Johnston, 1992; Noffke, 1990). However, when I asked the group what they hoped to gain from their participation in the study, each responded with very specific objectives. In addition, they expressed an interest in helping me generate ideas for new interpretations of citizenship education and they intended to be actively involved in the process of creating and analyzing these ideas. I was uncomfortable imposing the values of the academe on the group by insisting everyone participate in the writing. Instead, we focused on the collaborative processing of ideas, and each established goals for our participation. My objective was to produce a written representation of our activities. In addition to the objectives we established individually, the group committed to a larger goal: we strove to claim new spaces for women in social studies education.

Focus Group Discussions. Our group conducted a series of focus group discussions, which provided the primary source for "data" and ideas to be included in the study.[3] Given the nature of the study, and participants' indicated interest in the topic, focus group discussions enabled us to create a synergy through which we built upon and responded to one another's experiences, perceptions and

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[3]Initially, I planned on five focus group discussions. However, at the end of our fifth meeting, we concluded additional discussions needed to occur. In the end, we "officially" met for eight focus group discussions. Each of these discussions lasted

conclusions. When describing the nature of the "interview," Richardson (1997) explains, "Such interviews are essentially interactional speech events created in particular contexts; interviews are themselves examples of lived experience" (p. 141). Consequently, I chose to use the term "focus group *discussion*" to denote the intentional and deliberate nature of the meetings, as well as our mutual exchange and shaping of ideas. By design, then, the discussions were similar in structure to seminars in which ideas emerge from shared readings, individual experiences, and group interaction. The focus group discussions took place in my kitchen, usually on Sunday evening. The context was intended to be informal, intimate, and safe.

In preparation for our focus group discussions, the group read or listened to materials regarding various perspectives on educating for democratic citizenship. While many of these materials centered primarily on feminist issues, the scope of the readings was emergent and other theoretical orientations were included as issues arose. In the initial discussions, these materials were identified through my review of the literature, and were selected based on issues raised and our previous meetings. However, during several meetings, other participants brought materials (stories, newspaper and journal articles, poems) which they found relevant to the discussion. This practice emerged informally and reinforced the collaborative nature of the process. While most of my contributions consisted of academic publications, the rest of the group tended toward fiction, information distributed at their schools, and information they had accessed from the World Wide Web. The ideas and perspectives represented in these materials became part of the data and represented other voices in our conversations. For each meeting, the previous week's discussion was transcribed verbatim (except in certain sections where notes summarized discussion not clearly related to the topic) and shared with the group. This process provided possibilities for returning to ideas expressed in earlier discussions and an opportunity for member checks. In the data analysis, these threads of conversations that emerged consistently in our conversations became part of a thematic organization for the representation of data.

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at least ninety minutes and five extended into two-hours or more.

In addition to using the focus group discussions to respond to particular readings, the sessions provided opportunities for exploring participants' life histories in order that we might better understand our positionalities and localities. Kvale (1996) describes a "semistructured life world interview . . . defined as *an interview whose purpose is to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomenon*" (p. 5, original italics). The group's constructions of ourselves as women and our interpretations of "democratic citizenship" were intricately connected to the experiences we identified as most significant in shaping these perceptions.

Analysis of Data

From the beginning, it was clear that the process and product in this study could not be separated. Building on Richardson's (1990, 1994, 1997) model for writing as inquiry, the process of collecting, analyzing, and writing occurred simultaneously. The emergent design of the study required that each week's discussion be transcribed and undergo an initial analysis before additional readings could be identified. Once the transcribing process was complete, I went back through the document and changed the fonts, so a participant's words were represented in a particular font that could be easily distinguished from the others. This provided a visual representation of our voices. An illustrative example is provided below:

Dawn: I thought about this notion of being uncomfortable. I was thinking that my grandfather would have been uncomfortable if anyone had questioned his sense of belonging. And then I thought, and my grandfather was a wonderful man, but maybe we all deserve to be a little uncomfortable once in a while.

Leanne: Well, I think when you have this discomfort, it forces you to take a stand. It forces you to make a decision, to reason things out. Rather than just accepting things as they go along.

Nancy: Don't you think most people's reaction to discomfort is to dig in? I mean, it's not to be open. Well, fight or flight. But not usually to have an open discourse about it! (Laughter from the group.) I'm feeling a little uncomfortable, I think we need to talk about it! (More laughter.)

Shannon: I'm just picturing my father in law.

As I reviewed the transcripts, I identified threads in our conversations. This process was facilitated by the rest of the group who, at the end of each session, assisted in clarifying what they

perceived to be the most compelling or important issues raised during the evening. As I noted consistencies or contradictions in our discussions, I shared these with the group. In a dialectic and dialogic process, the group discussed my discussion of our discussions. This strategy supports Richardson's (1994) rejection of one dimension: "Rather, the central image is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multi-dimensionalities, and angles of approach" (p. 522). As a framework for all of the discussions developed, I initiated a process I refer to as a "postmodern constant comparative method." Unlike the constant comparative method of analysis posited by Glaser and Strauss (1967), in which data are broken down into discrete parts and then compared with other "units" of date to create categories (see also Strauss & Corbin, 1990), this process involved keeping the conversation intact and juxtaposing pieces of theoretical literature against the discussion to add other layers to the discourse.

For example, during our initial discussion we spent a great deal of time discussing how we would define the concept *citizen*. Not surprisingly, our definitions started with what might be described as a definition of *political* citizenship: the right to vote, the functions of the government, legal processes, etc. However, prior to our meeting, the group had also listened to an audio taped session of a 1997 AERA session in which Gloria Ladson-Billings, Jane Roland Martin, Nel Noddings, and Lynda Stone presented other definitions of citizenship, including the concept of *cultural* citizenship. After discussing a variety of different meanings for the term, and analyzing the origins of these various interpretations, our discussion turned to the ways in which citizenship is presented in schools. Leanne concluded:

I don't know if we ever really did teach citizenship, now that I think about it. But perhaps we've gotten to the point where we're so afraid to step on somebody's toes that we don't dare tell anybody that this is the way a good citizen does things . . . We're so afraid to push our values off on somebody else that we just teach *about things* rather than teaching *students*.

In reviewing the literature, numerous definitions of citizenship appeared which offered some of the social and political context for how citizenship is defined. Some of these definitions included:

citizenship (sit'ə zən ship), *n.* membership in a state or nation, with all the duties, rights, privileges, and responsibilities that go with being a member (Patrick & Remy, 1980, p. 547);

According to the *National Standards for Civics and Government*, "citizenship means that a person is recognized as a legal member of the nation; gives each person certain rights and privileges, e.g., the right to vote and hold public office; (and) means each person has certain responsibilities, e.g., respecting the law, voting, paying taxes, servin
citizens owe allegiance or loyalty to the United States; in turn they receive protection and other services from the government" (Center for Civic Education, 1994, p. 35);

And, finally,

The postmodern era, at the last, necessitates a new conception of citizenship, in which diversity and difference are valued and the modernist power hierarchy continues to devolve . . . The past, the present, and continuing lessons learned amongst feminist scholars contribute much to a new citizenship: difference over sameness, multiplicity over singularity, fluidity over stasis. If indeed postmodernism heralds a new age, then a new conception of citizenship is not only logically but also ethically appropriate. We need not deny the successes of modernism, but we must respond to its failures" (Stone, 1996, p. 51).

The inclusion of the literature in this manner responded to a concern expressed by Goodson (1998) regarding the use of narrative: "(A) primary reliance on narratives or life stories is likely to limit our capacity to understand social context and relationship as well as social and political purposes. Sole reliance on narrative becomes a convenient form of political quietism – we can continue telling our stories (whether as life 'stories' or research 'stories') and our searchlight never shines on the social and political construction of lives and life circumstances" (p. 10). Once all of the focus group discussions had been completed, I returned to these frameworks and the recurring threads that we identified in the group.

In the next phase of analysis, I reorganized the data, including the pieces of theoretical literature, according to the themes we had revisited numerous times in our discussions and developed a "story" (Donmoyer, 1990; Donmoyer & Yennie-Donmoyer, 1995; Goodson, 1998; Polkinghorne, 1992) which was grounded in the data, but also included fictional elements and additional information from the literature. The excerpts from the literature were included in text boxes, to distinguish them from part of our original discussions. This strategy enhanced the richness of our discussions and allowed for a deeper understanding of the data. As early as 1973, Geertz asserted a good interpretation takes us to the center of the experience being described. A story enabled me to capture and personalize the complexity of this research process.

I divided the story into three acts, each devoted to a general theme which held together aspects of our discussions. These acts included two or more scenes (Merryfield, 1986) that focused on one of the participants but included the voices of the rest of the group, as well as those represented in the literature (see scene in Appendix). Using scenes to represent the data provided me with an opportunity to contextualize the discussion by integrating dimensions of participants' lives and internal thought processes. In the example introduce above, I created a scene in which Leanne was driving away from one of our focus group discussions. The setting provided an opportunity to introduce additional information about Leanne and the other participants in the study – much the way details about characters in a story unfold. In addition, changing the context illustrated the extent to which our thinking about these issues occurred beyond the confines of my kitchen. Finally, this strategy met Eisner's (1997) challenge to represent data in ways that provide what might be called "productive ambiguity" . . . so that it "generates insight and invites attention to complexity" (p. 8). Like most "interviews," the construction of knowledge did not begin or end with the discussion itself; instead, our discussions were the products of multiple layers of socially constructed meanings.

The quotations represented in the scenes were excerpts from the original data, with the exception of very short passages included to make the scene richer for the reader. These statements were intended to be consistent with the life and experiences of the participant (e.g., in the scene described above, Leanne talks to her dog; while I have seen her talk to her dog in a similar manner, I did not hear her make these particular comments). The final result of this process was a story in which our conversations and ideas were represented in the context of our daily lives. Thus, the story moved between the lines of the research and our personal spaces, as well as challenged the distinctions between what would traditionally be considered "data" and the fiction in which I embedded the data. Again, my desire was to represent the data in a manner that encouraged the reader to "hear" the voices of those involved in the discourse, including the calls from the literature. I wanted to create a way to display these voices in a type of visual

reader's theater. While typically used for plays and other forms of drama, I included the terms "acts" and "scenes" instead of "chapters" to move the story further into a genre in which participants became characters or actors and our personal spaces became settings for the "drama" to unfold.

In the final version of the story, I continued to use various fonts for each speaker. The different fonts acknowledge that voices of the post-paradigmatic diaspora speak from many perspectives. I intended to visually interrupt my readers as the partiality or situatedness of a particular idea was addressed. If, as Foucault (1991) and other postmodernists suggest, knowledge and power are generated through discourse, the discursive elements of this process needed to be clearly illustrated. This approach to data representation also provided an opportunity to include our subjectivities in a manner that not only recognized our positions; we embraced them as part of the discourse.

While constructing stories from the data is not yet conventional in educational research, Eisner (1993) suggests, "The battle that once ensued to secure a place for qualitative research in education has largely been won . . . . Now the question turns to just what it is that different forms of representation employed within the context of educational research might help us grasp" (cited in Kvale, 1997, p. 270). Eisner's statement is not about the "mental representation" of cognitive science, but "the process of transforming the contents of consciousness into a public form so that they can be stabilized, inspected, edited, and shared with others" (cited in Kvale, 1997, p. 271). Using the data and literature to create a story and illustrating the multiplicity of voices through the use of different fonts, point sizes, and margins offered possibilities for a public form which would invite teachers, theorists, and students to "disrupt, transgress, and create possibilities" for (re)considering citizenship.

Criteria for Evaluating the Study: Pinnacles and Pitfalls

One of the challenges in developing an eclectic research methodology is the difficulty of assessing the quality of the study. While this study fell into what Eisner (1997) describes as a "broad" conception of research, it did not fit neatly into pre-existing categories of research. While in many ways the process of

generating the data and ideas included in the study were consistent with more traditional approaches to research, the strategy for representing the data was not. The most important issue in using participants' voices and ideas to create a "story," particularly one which also contains elements of fiction, concerns my ethical obligations to them and to the reader. In addition, I drew upon current discussions about new ways of interpreting "validity" to identify five criteria for assessing the study. Each of these criteria is presented in the form of a question; the first two address concerns regarding the methods used during the research process and the last three reflect the goals of the study. Finally, using the "promise and perils" Eisner identifies for alternative forms of data representation, I include four additional questions that provide guidelines for determining the merit and worth of the study. After discussing the "standards" for evaluating the quality of the study, I present what I perceive to be potential "pitfalls" in this alternative form of data representation.

What Are My Ethical Obligations?

In every research process, there are ethical issues to consider; this study was no exception. Throughout the study, I struggled with two issues. First, there was an element of power dynamics at work because of my role as the study's initiator and coordinator, and second, it was inevitable that I would "own" the majority of what emerged from the study, given that the data would be used for my research.

McLaren's (1991) work on "Field Relations and the Discourse of the Other" and "Collision with Otherness" (1992) addresses many of my concerns about power. McLaren raises questions about "Whose interests are being served by our research efforts?" and receptive formations. Participants will come to the study, McLaren explains, with "conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions . . . (and) . . . ways of understanding (their) relation to the world" (McLaren, 1991, citing Weedon, p. 32). From the beginning, I attempted to approach both of my roles, as participant and as researcher, with sensitivity. When inviting each individual to participate in the study, I expressed my understanding if they were unable to commit their time and energy. In addition, I provided them with letters of informed consent, in order to insure

they understood my responsibilities as a researcher. I also made explicit the ways in which my interests were being promoted through their participation in the study. While we each identified goals or reasons for participating in the study, in the end none were so concrete or self-serving as my own.

The study's flexible design, however, provided opportunities for the group to determine the direction and, to some extent, the outcome of the study. Reason's (1994) model for co-operative inquiry emphasizes the importance of addressing participants as "self-determining, which means that what they do and what they experience as part of the research must be so some significant degree determined by them" (p.325). While I prepared a list of guiding questions for each week's discussion, the group rarely responded to many, if any, of the queries posed. Instead, participants routinely build on one another's ideas to generate ideas. I reviewed the transcripts at the end of each session to determine whether or not my voice dominated the discussion or dictated the direction. In addition, on numerous occasions I asked for feedback from the group regarding whether or not the discussions should be more or less structured. While clearly my own agenda was promoted through their participation, in our final debriefing, each member of the group expressed an appreciation for the opportunity to share in our discussions and develop her own thinking on the questions raised by the study.

The second issue, that of ownership, was even more complex. To some extent, these issues are related to the ethical considerations faced by all "insider" researchers.[4] The friendship that existed within the group before this study was initiated added another layer of complexity. In representing the voices of the other participants, I was aware of the trust they bestowed on me – particularly when, as a group, they decided that I should use their real names. As the final drafts of the story were written, my role in its creation became more and more prominent. While this may have been inevitable, my relocation to the state of Washington in the final stages of writing made regular communication with the group even more difficult.

I was, however, committed to crafting a tale that, while representing our angst and contradictions, also reflected the warmth of our community. During one of our sessions, we discussed a chapter entitled "Care as a Political Concept" (Tronto, 1996). Noddings (1995) also uses this term when describing schools. I found this term uppermost in my mind as I constructed scenes and shared small details of the lives of these participants . . . these women . . . my friends. In the end, it may be this very feminist notion that as researchers we should care for those *with* whom, and to some extent *on* whom, we do research that will have the most lasting impact on me.

What Role Did Participants Have in Constructing the Story? Throughout the process, participants were asked to provide *member checks* on the quality of transcription and interpretation of the data. The story was shared with participants as various segments were written and they were asked for comments, corrections, and revisions when the story was complete. Participants' suggested revisions were made or noted in a text box to insure their perspectives regarding the story were represented. In addition, while the story itself contains fictitious elements (settings, actions, context of the thoughts or conversations), participants maintain our own voices (i.e. quotations or thoughts presented as Doreen's can be traced to her contributions to the focus group discussions).

What was the Process for Collecting and Organizing Data? In addition to conducting regular member checks, all aspects of the study were carefully recorded and filed in my journal.[5] My journal includes all of the memos, readings, and transcriptions shared with the group. In addition, I used the journal to record my reflections on the process. The original materials were maintained in chronological order so that I could trace the development of certain concepts and themes throughout the process. For example, prior to each meeting I selected two or three readings to share with the group. In order to

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[4] For a compelling discussion of these issues, see Baca Zinn (1979).

[5] While I broached the subject with having each participant maintain a journal, the idea was met with little enthusiasm. I was keenly aware of the amount of time these teachers were already dedicating to this study. The readings I distributed each week required considerable time to digest, particularly given that much of the language in several of the pieces was new to most of the group. Although members of the group were offered course credit for their participation, thereby providing justification for spending additional time on their participation, Shannon was the only one interested in acquiring more credit hours. She, however, did not have access to a fee waiver and paying

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identify these readings, I typically considered ten to twelve possibilities. Each of these possibilities, and my notes, were included in the journal. The journal also includes the pieces selected for each of our meetings, with a one or two page summary regarding my rationale for choosing those readings. My notes on each of the readings are color coded and dated. Notes from my initial reading appear in black, comments on the readings that emerged during our discussions are noted in red, and additional reflections on the pieces are made in blue; all are coded and dated accordingly.

The process of transcribing the focus group discussions also required careful documentation. The date of each discussion and the number of the discussion in the sequence was recorded on each cassette. Copies of each of the interview tapes provided a back-up in case of accidental erasure or damage. As indicated earlier, I noted details about the discussion (gestures, rolling of the eyes, expressions of frustration) which would not be evident in the audio taped version of our discussion. My position next to the tape recorder allowed me to monitor the tape, as well as record the counter number in my notes. As I transcribed the discussions, these details were added in parenthetical notations.

While most of the data was transcribed verbatim, portions of the conversation not directly related to the topic were summarized. In addition, the familiarity among group members also elicited comments or revelations about personal lives that were not relevant to this study. These sections were noted with a series of stars in the typed transcriptions. The original transcriptions were numbered by line so pieces of data could be easily identified and traced. After the initial process was completed, I changed the fonts of each of the speakers in order to represent visually each of the voices engaged in our conversation. My comments and reflections were noted in italicized print so these could be distinguished easily and quickly from the original discussion.

How Does the Study Promote Reflexivity for Participants and Readers? Scheurich's view of validity in terms of "our reflexion on our practices and our 'worlding the world' through discourse" (cited in Lenzo, 1993, p. 12) was also relevant to this study. Since one of the primary objectives of the study

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fees for tuition were not an option at that time.

was the (re)consideration of citizenship from feminist perspectives, the extent to which participants express deliberate, thoughtful analysis of the issues as they related to multiple perspectives and worldviews also served as an indication of validity. Our success in this area was determined both through the original focus group discussions (evidence of connections to the classroom, critical considerations of our assumptions, deconstruction of the readings and terminology) and the representation of the data (juxtaposing our discussions with others in the larger discourse, layering of multiple voices).

What Action Emerged from Participants' Involvement in the Study? The collaborative nature of the study rested on the assumption that each participant might identify and reach a goal through her participation in this study. Lather (1986) refers to "catalytic validity" -- meaning the extent to which the research process resulted in action. This pragmatic criterion for validity would be met if each participant in the process achieved her stated goals. With varying degrees of success, these conclusions were confirmed with participants as the study ended.

For example, Nancy indicated a change in her approach to teaching, this achieving her goal to reconsider her practice from a feminist perspective. Specifically, Nancy identified a new approach to issues of power and control in her classroom. In addition, though her participation in this study merely served to reinforce this desire, Nancy is considering embarking on her own doctoral studies with a possible emphasis in Women's Studies and/or feminist pedagogy.

Shannon, at the time of the study a first year teacher, discussed the desire to develop curriculum materials that "worked against" the apathetic acceptance her students exhibited towards malestream conceptions of citizenship. During the course of the study, Shannon routinely sought feedback from the more experienced teachers in the group regarding student-centered projects and lessons oriented toward getting students more actively involved in their local community. Since our last "official" focus group discussion, Shannon has left her previous position and currently works with Doreen in one of Columbus's alternative schools. This particular school, in part because of Doreen's encouragement, supports strong

connections to the community and promotes students' involvement in local civic issues.

Doreen's goal related to the prospect of attaining grant monies to support programs that would enhance the concept of citizenship among high school students. At the end of our focus group discussions, Doreen discussed the possibility of using our discussions as the basis for a summer institute on citizenship for students from their respective schools. While the project was not initiated during the summer of 1998, possibilities for summer, 1999 are being explored.

When asked at our first focus group discussion what she hoped to gain from her participation in the study, Leanne replied, "I just value the conversation and the opportunity to connect with other women in social studies." While it is impossible to assert our participation in this study brought us closer as a group, I believe that without a clearly defined reason for gathering, our busy schedules would often have prevented us from meeting so frequently. These meetings provided each of us with an opportunity to reinforce our relationship with the others and explore our ideas in a safe, but challenging, environment. The ongoing contact of the group through e-mail, telephone conversations, and meetings, as well as our plans for the future (conference presentations, additional opportunities for collaboration) demonstrate a commitment to the community we established.

My goal was the conduct and completion of this study. As the "researcher" in the group, I hoped to develop a new, participatory, feminist methodology for collaboration. For the most part, I, too, achieved this goal. The process confirmed my beliefs regarding the false dichotomy between theory and practice, the extent to which university-based researchers underestimate teachers' interest in and ability to consider "high theory," and the value of providing broader definitions for "collaboration" if we are to truly "invent possiblities." I am left, however, with numerous questions about the methodology – including how "standing on the precipice" will serve me as an assistant professor in an academe still dominated by modernist criteria for success.

Our effectiveness in achieving catalytic validity should not, however, be presented as a "victory

narrative" in which one is left with the impression that participating in this study was a life-changing event for any of the participants. I suspect each of these "changes" would have occurred with or without our participation in the study. As discussed in the final chapter regarding the methodological implications for this study, additional attention should be given to each participant's goals in order for the collaboration to be more meaningful. The preexisting relationship among participants in this study provided a sense of purpose for our group independent of the goals identified in relation to this study.

How Did the Study Challenge Modernist, Hegemonic Traditions? Lather (1992) posits another criteria for validity: rhizomatic validity. Lather suggests certain studies are appropriately assessed on the basis of whether or not the study "destabilizes authority from within through connectivity" (p. 32). One of the assumptions of the study was that citizenship in the United States has been defined primarily in terms of political citizenship by White, men holding positions of power and authority. By making connections among voices from historically disenfranchised and marginalized groups, the study attempted to challenge this hegemony. The representation of data challenges the hegemonic discourse surrounding the concept of citizen and citizenship education by juxtaposing these ideas with a cacophony of voices, including but not limited to those of the participants. My intent was for educators, those who participated in the study and those who will read about it in the future, to consider the possibilities that exist if we interrogate the authority of existing curriculum and programs and move beyond narrow interpretations of citizenship. In this case, the study's rhizomatic validity may not be ascertained until the story is shared with others.

How Does this Form of Representation Shape Experience and Enlarge Understanding? Eisner (1997) suggests that one "job" that researchers have is "engendering a sense of empathy for the lives of the people they wish us to know" (p. 8). He advocates that reseachers use the tool most appropriate for accomplishing this task. Why is empathy important? Eisner posits that "we have begun to realize that human feeling does not pollute understanding." I would argue even further, that human

feeling enhances our understanding by generating internal relations among our various ways of knowing.

Creating scenes in which the reader obtains glimpses of our lives and the interaction of our daily experiences with our thinking about the issues that emerged in the study provided a vehicle for this type of empathetic understanding. Data presented in traditional forms, with excerpts presented in small sections that are often isolated from the speaker's identity, fail to have "the power to evoke in the reader what the reader needs to experience to know the person someone portrays" (Eisner, 1997, p. 8).

How Does the Story Provide a Sense of Particularity that Abstractions Cannot Render? Again, building on the guidelines provided by Eisner (1997), the intention of the story was ". . . to know each individual character. When done well, the situation and the people take on their own distinctive qualities. They acquire dimension. Particularity and dimensionality are conditions of something being 'real'" (p. 8). When framing this study, I was struck by the extent to which citizenship had stopped being something real, authentic, meaningful. In addition to wanting to represent the participants and our discussions as genuine, I sought a method for "revisioning" citizenship in a way that encouraged re(new)ed discourse among social studies educators. Placing our conversations, as well as the theoretical literature, in the context of every day life offered an opportunity to encourage readers to see connections to their own "real" lives, as well as to disrupt those lives and consider new possibilities.

How Does the Story Create "Productive Ambiguity"? Eisner (1997) explains that "productive ambiguity" means "the material presented is more evocative than denotative, and in its evocation, it generates insight and invites attention to complexity. Unlike the traditional ideal of conventional research, some alternative forms of data representation result in less closure and more plausible intepretations of the meaning of the situation" (p. 8). My goal for the study was not to develop a definitive, feminist interpretation of what it means to educate citizens in a democracy. In fact, it was just the opposite. Instead of a narrow definition, I hoped to generate interest in a public discourse on what this means as we face a new millenium. That this was accomplished among the participants in the study is a small measure

of success. If I am able to use these initial conversations as a genesis for additional dialogues with people representing multiple identities and localities, an even greater level of "productive ambiguity" will be achieved.

Does the Story Provide an Opportunity to Exploit Individual Aptitude? The extent to which I am able to use my skills as a writer to invite the reader into our lives and discussions is still in question. My previous experiences with data representation have been limited to more traditional forms and brief forays into reflexive and postmodern writing. This task, however, stretched my skills as a scholar, as a researcher, and as a writer. I leave the response to this question to the readers of the story that follows.

What are the "Pitfalls" of Using Alternative Forms of Data Representation? In addition to the issues of subjectivity, the problems associated with representing "the Other" and the ethical questions addressed earlier in this chapter, there are additional considerations for any researcher embarking on this path. One challenge is the extent to which existing structures preclude alternative forms of data representation. For example, in order to write the story using different fonts and text boxes to represent the various voices involved, I first needed permission from my committee. I am grateful to have had a committee that not only supported this idea, but encouraged me in the endeavor. However, I also needed to petition the Graduate College for a waiver on the established guidelines regarding font size and type, margins, and the use of text boxes. While permission was granted for the dissertation, I foresee future difficulties finding journal editors willing to reproduce any segment of the story as it is currently represented because of format standards.

Eisner (1997) identifies a second "peril" that has to do "not with a problem inherent in the use of alternative forms of data representation, but in a potential backlash from their use" (p. 9). Like Eisner, I foresee a potential for resistance from educational researchers not hanging out here "on the precipice" with me. I needed to assume responsibility, therefore, to demonstrate that I was not "substituting novelty and cleverness for substance" (Eisner, p. 9). In order to create spaces for research such as this, I and others of

like mind, must clearly describe the context of our work and hold ourselves to the highest of standards.

"Findings" of the Study

The intention of this study was not to produce a "report of findings." Instead, the purpose was to generate a public discourse on what it means to educate for democratic citizenship. There were, however, recurring strands in our discussion that served as the framework for the story. The following themes illustrate these strands:

"I Don't Think I've Ever Taught Citizenship, Not Really": Defining the Discussion illustrated the ambiguity created when the group attempted to move beyond the definition of political citizenship. Our discussion was complicated by juxtaposing our beliefs and values against the ways in which citizenship has traditionally been defined in social studies education, as well as current interpretations in postmodern literature.

"My God, I Think I Ought to Think of Myself as a Post-Feminist": Deconstructing Feminism explored our resistance to essentialist notions of feminism. We explored the implications of identities as women on our teaching, our construction of knowledge, and the extent to which the deeper issues related to gender are addressed in schools in general, and social studies education in particular.

"I'm Not Sure I Want to be 'Mother' to 150 Kids": Blurring the Boundaries Between Public and Personal addresses an issue identified in much of the feminist literature. In the political realm, the public/private binary relegates many "women's issues" (i.e. child care, health care, abuse) to secondary status. The group's discussions also made connections to the relationship of teachers' and students' *private* lives on our *public* schools. We concluded the imposition of such binaries is artificial and impedes us from moving to a more productive discourse about the meaning of citizenship.

"Who's Part of the 'Out' Group?": Interrogating Issues of Identity focused on the role of race, ethnicity, and culture on citizenship. As our discussions evolved, it was apparent that feminist interpretations of citizenship should not exclude other historically disenfranchised and oppressed groups.

The discussions were sometimes uncomfortable as we recognized our own positions of privilege. Consistent with a postmodern perspective, positions of power shifted depending on who was identified as part of the group.

"Why Can't Care be a Political Concept?": Revisioning Citizenship provided an opportunity to reconceptualize the meaning of citizenship and its role in our society. Responding to feminist interpretations of citizenship in political theory, we generated ideas about the implications of such visions for social studies education. The group struggled to reconcile these ideas with current trends towards curriculum standards and proficiency tests.

"What Happens Next?": Reclaiming the Conversation provided the foundation for the implications of the study. We ended the study with a commitment to continue the discussion using a variety of forms and including numerous venues. The study, and the ideas that may be generated from it, presents exciting possibilities for social studies education. First, the extent to which such discussions are omitted from preservice teacher education programs leaves new teachers unprepared to challenge existing perceptions of citizenship. Without an invitation to the conversation, these preservice teachers will not "invent possibilities" for new ways to help their students create and/or claim spaces. Next, the level of reflection and enthusiasm with which the teachers in this study engaged with the theoretical literature raises interesting questions about the "anti-theoretical" stereotype imposed on many classroom teachers. University courses and inservice programs should engage teachers in meaningful, philosophical discourse about the meaning of democracy, the meaning of citizenship, and the role of teachers in educating students for democracy. Finally, the social studies curriculum and the current trend toward standardization and proficiency testing runs the risk of further entrenching definitions of citizenship that fail to motivate or inspire large numbers of students, or their teachers.

The study also has implications for future research. Speaking from what he describes as the "cutting edge" of inquiry in research methodology, Eisner (1997) suggests, "One of the basic questions

scholars are now raising is how we perform the magical feat of transforming the contents of our consciousness into a public form that others can understand" (p. 4). Eisner's call from the precipice has particular relevance for educational researchers, like myself, working within/against feminist and postmodern theories while engaging in collaborative inquiry with practitioners. The feminist and postmodern discourse surrounding what it means to do research "with" and not "on" (Noffke, 1990) "Others" (hooks, 1994) has focused on issues of reflexivity, subjectivities, and the politics of representation. Eisner reminds us that the complexities of research extend beyond the ways in which we shape and are shaped by our "consciousness" and include the forms through which our research is communicated to others.

Appendix A
The Homeplace

Doreen's keys jingled in the early morning air. She crawled around the back seat of her car, carefully maneuvering around the piles of papers, books, magazines and newspapers. Her back seat had become an extension of her dining room table, which was an extension of her desk at school. Earlier in the week she had joked with her "feminist focus group" about the "laying on hands" routine in which she finds herself touching each pile periodically – ostensibly because she's looking for something but, perhaps, also to insure that they are all there.

Her balance was precarious as she juggled her coffee cup, the chosen pile of materials, and her constantly stuffed book bag and made her way across the thin sheet of ice which covered the school parking lot. This morning she hoped for a school cancellation and then, remembering the superintendent was from Buffalo, realized she may have had her last snow day. Her car had been the first one in the parking lot for almost thirty years, after all, and she thought this might be her last superintendent.

As Doreen pulled open the door to her classroom and turned on the bright florescent lights, her eyes quickly scanned her domain. She recalled the focus group discussion regarding whether or not "home" was an appropriate metaphor for schools. On the tape they listened to before their meeting, Nel Noddings suggested schools should be like homes--nurturing, caring, safe. Doreen could hear Nancy's response to the metaphor.

> Well, they talked about the whole metaphor and I was thinking about how she had, in fact, stated overtly that she was leaving out the bad parts of home. She said metaphors typically do not include everything that is bad or include the whole. It just seemed to me really odd because it was so idealistic. If you're going to define home that way and then put that into schools, it's going to be idealistic in the schools as well.

To some extent, Nancy's comments echoed Doreen's questions about the metaphor. However, for Doreen, the nagging feeling went deeper. Had home ever been a nurturing, caring, safe place? She thought of her own childhood. She was the product of the era so fondly remembered by political

conservatives yearning for the period when family values reigned supreme. Her family life had been loving, but in no way resembled the Cleaver household. Doreen was the child of immigrants and raised in a large, industrial, mid-Western city. She thought of her students' homes. As a high school teacher, she was certain few of her students talked at home. It's a developmental thing. She had explained during the focus group discussion.

> It's a sense of independence, you keep your thoughts to yourself as a teenager. I mean you don't talk at home...when I think of my colleagues who have high school children (and) how upset they get when kids talk freely at home because they think their values have not been transmitted. And these aren't people who are right wing or people who are ultraliberal, they're not in any category, they just find—it's human nature to find yourself uneasy when you're kids are having their own opinions. So maybe home is a place for safe discourse when you're a child but not a teenager.

Doreen spent the next thirty minutes organizing her day. Slowly, the rest of the building came to life. Students started straggling into her classroom. Some of them were supposed to be there first period; others just wandered in for a few minutes and then exited, not really acknowledging her formally but noting her presence.

Doreen checked the clock: twenty minutes to spare. She reached for her bulging book bag and burrowed through its contents. Inside, Doreen found what she had been seeking. Dawn left three articles on her doorstep yesterday afternoon. The note attached explained that the focus group members should read one of the articles before their next meeting. Dawn briefly described the three pieces and her rationale for choosing each. Doreen would read them all, eventually, but with only a short time before class she wanted something short. The Lynda Stone piece looked wonderful, but too long and philosophical for a quick read. Amy Gutmann's chapter didn't grab her, either. And then she saw the essay from bell hooks, entitled "The Homeplace."

As she read through hooks's discussion of the role of the homeplace in the African American

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community, Doreen's mind turned to the phrase "cultural citizenship" which had been used so frequently in the audio taped discussion. When she listened to the tape, she'd felt as if she'd been dropped into the middle of something. Cultural citizenship was a new concept for her – though she'd often questioned how effective schools were in cultivating a sense of belonging among students. **How do we help students feel connected to a community?**

Hooks's description of the way in which her mother created a homeplace was particularly poignant for Doreen.

> In our family, I remember the immense anxiety we felt as children when mama would leave our house, our segregated community, to work as a maid in the homes of white folks. I believe that she sensed our fear, our concern that she might not return to us safe, that we could not find her (even though she always left phone numbers, they did not ease our worry.) When she returned home after working long hours, she did not complain. She made an effort to rejoice with us that her work was done, that she was home, making it seem as though there was nothing about the experience of working as a maid in a white household, in that space of Otherness, which stripped her of her power and dignity. (hooks, 1990, 46)

She paused for a moment and wondered about her colleagues with children at home, particularly single mothers. **Did they celebrate with their children when their work for the day was completed?** Doreen doubted it; **these women often seem harried and, well, bitchy, at school. And what about their students? Was it possible for teachers to give that same sense of security to their students? Could we, as women social studies teachers, play a special role in creating a homeplace for students? Teachers would need help in this; it had implications for preservice education.**

She checked her watch and realized it was time to get started. As she had done every day for most of her teaching career, she mentally pushed aside the projects left unfinished on the dining room table, and turned to her students. When she announced the assignment for the day, there was the usual assortment of

groans and complaints. Ok, she said, in her quiet, soothing voice, let's all whine together for fifteen seconds and get it over with. Then, let's get started.

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